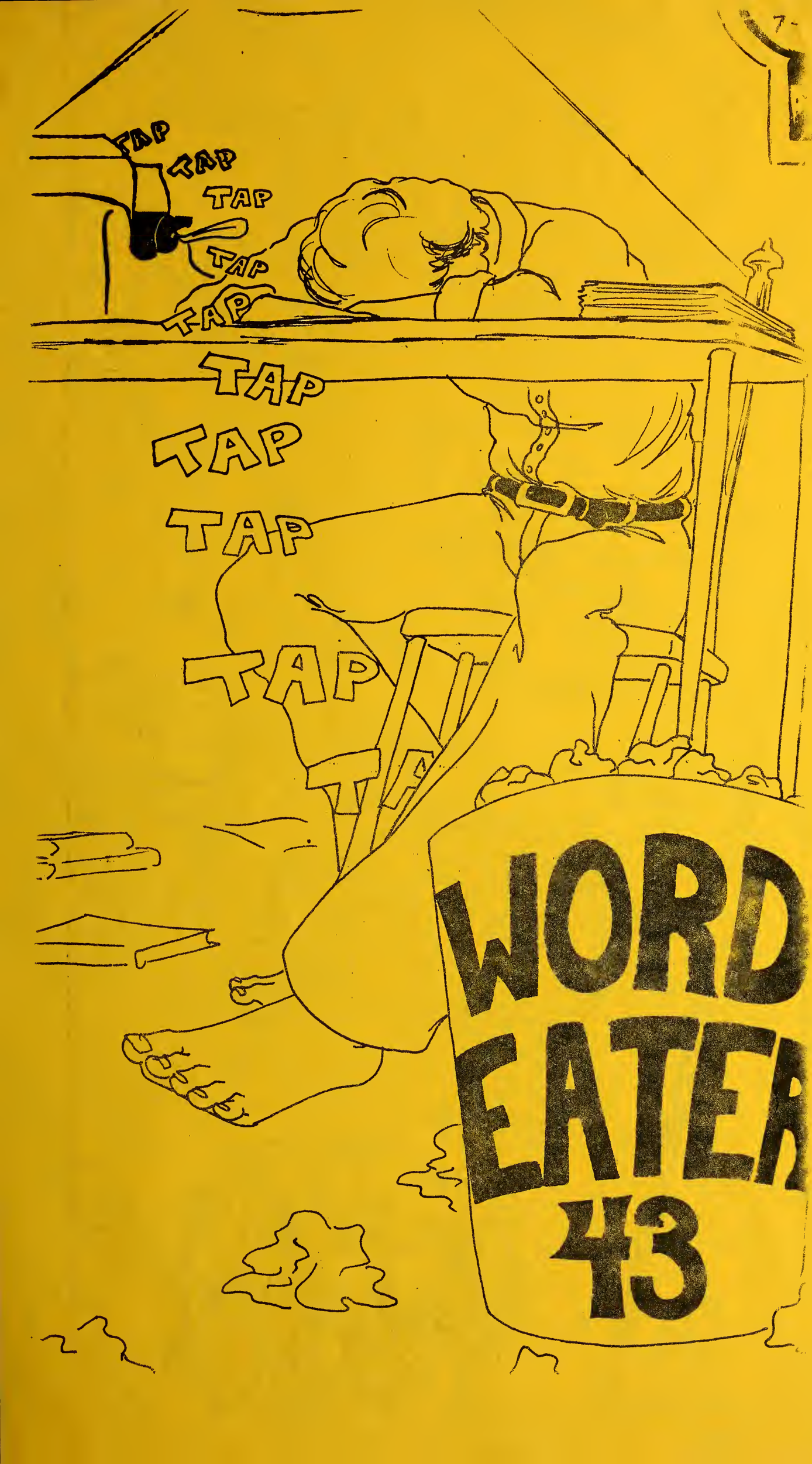
TAP
TAP
TAP
TAP
TAP
TAP
TAP
TAP
TAP
WORD
EATER
43

16. Determine the number of geese in a gaggle. Also the number of gaggles in a google. Show work.

17. Explain the phrase "tern-about is fair play."

18 What is a word-eater?

19. What notable characteristic dist
footed grebe?

21

22. Nam

Enus are

Wordeater

The wordeater is the largest member of a family of nocturnal animals (vocabulus consumue) common to Asia and Northern Africa. About three feet high (in adults), and covered with a pungent, odorous coat of brown fur, wordeaters are most commonly known for their consumption of the written word, in forms of novels, plays, and volumes of poetry. Wordeaters have a short, stubby frame, thin legs, and highly developed paws designed for openning thumb-indexed volumes. The wordeater's flat, high sloping head is distincly adorned with a flowing mane of hair that makes it quite distinguishable from its close cousin, the verbeater, whose diet subsists of only rich, flamboyant verbs. Wordeaters burrow into the soft, penetrable be
they excavate hundred
tunnel leading to the
carefully constructed
inge.

Wordeaters
in the North Afric
where an English e
had been searchin
Qualla-qualla bird
wordeater came
Maully, whose
preparing to dis
Journal:

June 14, 186
Bawa valley
elusive 'Quall
see any signs
brightly cove
camp in the
find that an
and had m
English di
Kipling. T
the remai
second a

we calle
he sat
by
of th
bind
mat
fon
sir
pe

WORDEATER XLIII STAFF

Judy Belfield
Steve Faron
David Moore
Mary Korst
Maureen Mueller
Michael A. Stillman
John Stobart

To get a submission printed in this issue, four of the people at the right had to vote for acceptance.

For the award winners, only John Stobart is responsible.

AWARDS THIS ISSUE

Awards

POETRY
$25

JAYNE WOODCOCK

PROSE
$25

THOMAS C. COLLNER

(Past prize winners are only considered when no new contributors seem worthy.)

Several fine cover designs were submitted for this issue. The final decision resulted in a tie.

$20 EACH GOES TO:

GREG CAMPBELL

&

JAYNE WOODCOCK

Covers

Manuscripts or cover designs for WORDEATER 44 must be submitted to John Stobart in room C-1069 by

APRIL 15, 1983

Deadline

Manuscripts will not be returned. They may be anonymous and SHOULD BE TYPED.

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****

Maureen Mueller

BREATHLESSLY IN LOVE

By the green and slimy marshes
  where the air was stale and thin
He gave his smog-filled heart to her
  as she coughed "Yes" to him.

The tears of joy flowed from their eyes
  or was it just pollution
That caused them both to pant and sigh--
  they needed a solution.

"We could move up to the mountains
  near the sticky River Scent
And raise our children 'naturally'
  in our own little oxygen tent.

And stay indoors and never want
  as long as the tanks are full
'Midst nuclear waste, in our own little place
  we'll disprove this ecology bull."

So they sneezed and wheezed endearments
  and vowed their love was true
And married in the "springtime"
  near the sludge-environed slew.

****

Judy Belfield

PSYCHOMAMMA

I love you, Norman Bates,
Even though we argue,
And the fruit-cellar's dark.
Gotta test your wings,
Let go my apron strings,
And try to fly
As far as the birds
With the glassy-eyed stares
Down there in the office.

Such a good boy, Norman,
Cleaning up after me,
Even though I'm cranky--
But I'm old, you see,
Don't get around much on my own.
Sure, we have our little spats--
It's the way it is
With mommas and their little boys.

But we know what's thicker than water,
Don't we, Norman?

****

Leonard Ludtke

BANG BANG, YOU'RE DEAD

Bang. The pedestrian falls, twitches twice, and dies. Bang. The car swerves out of control and hits a lamppost, dead hands at the steering wheel. Bang. All the years of waiting are finished, all the dreams (nightmares?) have come true. Here, alone on this cold and lonely roof, I take my vengeance on the society that made me. Bang. The woman's brains splatter onto the face of her now-screaming child. Bang. Bye-bye, Sonny, nobody likes a cry-baby. Bang. The years of training, a lifetime of brainwashing, have finally paid off. When some kill,

(continued)

Dave O'Brien

YET ANOTHER LIMERICK

There once was a man named McBeth
Who met an untimely death
The poor old soul
Broke open a mole
And wound up bleeding to death.

****

Nancy Lockhart

FILLERS

They aren't odes,
They aren't ditties,
Not profound,
Nor even pretties,
Couldn't really call them killers;
To be quite honest,
They're only fillers.

One
Little warmth,
Little light,
Humming softly
Through the night,
(My) electric friend.

Two
I've spent my life
Writing out thank you notes.
Now I've run out of ink.
(God knows I'm grateful.)

****

Maureen Mueller

SCHLOCK

Sling some stylistic schmaltz--
  syrup-soaked snippets
    simplistically sapid
Sashay seductive subtleties--
  soul-sabotaging swoons
    sacrilegiously slick
Sappy?
Sure.
Salivation salvation!
. . . satiety

****

they feel pleasure. Others feel pain, sadness or remorse. All I feel is recoil. Bang. The mailman collapses, a bullet in his heart, his warm red blood painting the morning mail. Bang. Months of wondering, running from the truth. Ages of pain, piled high upon the foundation of a broken heart. Disillusionment takes its toll. Bang. The weary bag lady staggers, staring in disbelief at the flow of blood staining her shabby, moth-eaten coat. Bang. At long last, I have made the big time. Heads will turn, people will sit up and take notice. The people who made me what I am. Shaped me, molded me with desires and demands, threats and warnings. And above all, never be a failure. Bang. The wail of sirens reaches my ears, enraging me, as a red flag would a bull. Bang. I have killed today, but I have only killed nobodies. No politicians or world leaders, no corporate magnates or billionaires. No one who is responsible, only little people, like me. Bang. The sirens grow louder, and the tinny sound of a bullhorn now joins in the haunting refrain. Give yourself up. You can't win. Bang. Failure looms over me, like a giant spectre, hand in hand with his partner, death. Bang. The realization of failure sweeps across me in a tidal wave of pain and guilt. Failure. Slowly, tearfully, I reverse my rifle, placing the muzzle in my mouth. Failure. Bang.

****

Judy Belfield

CLICHES FROM THE WORLD OF ESPIONAGE

I rented a trenchcoat
from the spy-supply shop
and stood on the corner
pretending to read the Times.
(Oh, the Times, they is a'changin
what with a hole in the middle of page one.)

I waited all day for my prey to appear,
putting up with jeers
from snickerin fools.
I got plenty of looks,
and had many suspicions,
but nobody filled the bill--
or everybody did,
and I couldn't follow them all.

Tomorrow, I'll hide in the shadows
like Orson Welles
while the zither music goes mad
and wait for Mr. Bond
to find me.

****

Rosemary Grossi

EMERGENCY ROOM

Solemn
Silence
Nothing to do but wait,
Why'd he leave so late?
Helplessness
Recriminations
Numbness
Lamentations
Hope drowns in despair,
Life leaves us unaware.
Solemn
Silence

****

Judy Belfield

SMALL TALK

They sit across from each other at a horseshoe-shaped counter sipping coffee. The gray morning sighs outside large plate-glass windows wanting to draw the darkness back up under her chin.

He wears a plaid flannel shirt. His small frame hunches around his coffee cup. A red and blue stocking cap sits on his gray-haired head. He smiles, and a dozen new wrinkles appear on his ruddy face.

She wears a heavy, black, cloth coat. Her skin is pale and pulpy and soft looking. She smiles back. The waitress whisks through, refilling their cups.

"Got yer Christmas shopping done?" she asks.

"I'm waiting 'til the last day," says the woman.

"Shoulda seen all the people at the Mall yesterday," says the man.

The waitress moves on.

"I used to work at Baskin's," says the man. "They got a dress code there. All the salesmen gotta wear wool socks. Course, they'll sell 'em to ya half-price."

"I hear wool socks are making a comeback," says the woman.

Silence. Except for clanking dishes murmuring voices, and the Ray Conniff Singers on the radio: "For all we know, we may never meet again." The music is soft. The smell of bacon dances with cigarette smoke. A school bus careen past in the traffic outside, cutting a yellow swath in the gray morning. Garish light bulbs shine in the morning's eyes, and a gray ache moans in her bones.

"S'posed to snow today," says the woman.

"Yeah?" the man asks.

(continued)

Small Talk, continued

"That's what they're forecasting."

"Had a helluva snowstorm out east last week," he says.

"My son lives in Boston," says the woman. Her eyes twinkle.

The man brings his coffee cup to his lips and empties it. He searches his pockets for change which he flips onto the counter--three silver coins. He stands and stretches, reaches for his coat, pays at the cash register, and at the door, he is swallowed up by the great, gray jaws of a yawning morning.

****

Dave O'Brien

A GAME OF QUESTIONS

"I don't think;
I don't know," said the wise man.
Rosewood sandals,
Cover up tea spots,
Stains on a four-ply
Oriental rug.

Teakwood bowl of opium
Incense burns the nose
Escape the sanitarium
A seed, therefore, arose

"I must be blind;
I cannot see," said the wise man.
Calloused fingers,
Cover up the mold spots
Stains on a worn out
Dungaree coat

Silver spoon of cocaine
Powder melts the nose
Excuses for some false pain
A seed, therefore, arose

A seed, therefore, arose my dear
A seed, therefore, arose
A choice is what you chose my dear
A choice is how you chose.

Ricky-ticky tailor
Christ and Norman Mailer
transistorized sermon
In a cardboard bailer

Lost children recreate,
Buddy Holly, Watergate,
Morals, guidelines, battleships,
Modern warfare,
Bleeding lips,
Arms and breasts,
Death and sex,
Numbers, signs, cancelled checks,
Mourning glories,
Last Hurray!
Herpes, headlines,
Ma and Pa.

Lullabies, no regrets,

Smoking low-tar cigarettes,
Mountain climbers in Tibet,
What did we forget?
Did you die yet?
Is the bed wet?

A seed, therefore, arose my dear
For what is in a name?
A choice is what you chose my dear
Fire is still a flame
The lame are always lame
Reasons why? Still remain
Win or lose,
Cheat, refuse,
The questions are the game.

****

Judy Belfield

TEA FOR THREE

I heard the morning groan
in my teacup--
moaning among the dregs
underneath the tea.
Like a proper old maid,
I crooked a pinkie finger in the air
and drank,
sipping slowly,
not disturbing the leaves.

I took the teacup to a gypsy
who pretended to portend.

We heard Maria Ouspenskaya speaking--
no matter what--
the violins played "Golden Earrings"
too loud
and drowned out the words.

The morning groaned
and cursed us both.

****

Nancy Lockhart

MRS. CHURCH

She was a circus lady of sorts,
Who fired her children through cannons
And shimmied, golden-robed, among impotent vipers.
A milkless mother with spires for tits,
Which it's said she rubbed against God and
Anyone else she cared to seduce.

Those who passed between her awesome thighs (the bastards),
Like pilgrims through a cathedral,
Visit her with predictable regularity and
A kind of mosaic guilt,
Never failing to drop money on the kitchen table
For cigarettes and rent;
The smell of her
Forever in their nostrils.

****

Thomas C. Collner

ALONE AGAIN

Little Sarah Annis was home in her bedroom thinking about her day at school. She remembered sitting in her desk at the back of the classroom. Miss Voight, her teacher, came up to her and asked why she wasn't out at recess with the other children. Sarah replied that she would rather be by herself, and that she didn't need any friends.

"Not need any friends? Don't you get lonely being by yourself all of the time?"

"Not really," said Sarah. "I'm getting used to being alone at home all the time. Besides, I have secret friends at home. They're always there."

"Secret friends? What do you mean by that?"

Miss Voight's and Sarah's conversation was interrupted by the sound of the bell calling the children in from recess.

Sarah walked up to her full-length mirror on the closet door, peered in, and saw one of her secret friends peering back at her. Sarah had dozens of secret friends in her bedroom. She looked up at the ceiling and saw more of her secret friends looking back. Sarah had friends covering every inch of her walls, friends in her closet and friends on her dresser. Sarah's favorite friend was a porcelain-backed hand mirror her mother gave her for her seventh birthday. Sarah went over to her dresser, picked the mirror up lovingly in her hands, and gazed dreamily into it. Sarah could almost hear the face in the mirror whispering, "I love you, Sarah. You're my bestest friend in the whole world."

A smile covered Sarah's face. She thought how lucky she was to have a father who was an interior decorator. If it weren't for him, Sarah wouldn't even have these friends.

Judy Belfield

TWO AND ONE AND TWO

A long time ago,
he and she became one.
She filed off her jagged edges.
He oversaw the job,
saying where and how to pare,
so that, eventually,
they fit together well.

In time,
she forgot what she shaved away,
not really missing the burrs
that hampered the fit,
happy, she thought,
to be a unit:
it was what all people wanted,
wasn't it?

One day, after heavy rains,
she warped,
tried to straighten out,
but couldn't;
he said because she wouldn't,
but will was not an issue
until he brought it up.

He and she are he and she again,
together and separate,
alone and not.

****

Sarah held her favorite mirror at arm's lentth and began to dance. Sarah waltzed with her mirror just like she saw the people on the television doing the night before. Sarah danced in graceful circles all the while smiling at her mirror. Faster and faster she danced. Sarah's friends all danced with her. How happy they all seemed dancing with each other; all of them with a beautiful porcelain mirror in their hands.

Sarah began laughing gaily. As she continued dancing her friends laughed too. Sarah thought how good it was to be with her friends. Her teacher was wrong. Sarah had friends. Friends that would never turn on her. Sarah laughed loud and hard. What did her teacher know?

Sarah's laughter was cut short when she tripped on one of the plush throw rugs that covered the floor of

(continued)

her room. Sarah regained her balance just in time to see her mirror fly across the room and shatter on one of the posts of her canopied bed.

Sarah ran across the room with tears stinging her eyes and knelt beside the mirror. Broken. Sarah couldn't believe it. Her favorite mirror lay in a thousand pieces on the carpet. Sarah lifted herself to her feet and brushed a few bits of glass from her knees. Sarah blotted the tears from her eyes with the hem of her dress and kept her eyes fixed on the floor. Sarah wondered how she could ever face her other friends again after being so careless. With her eyes still fixed on the floor, Sarah shuffled out of the room and headed for the broom closet. Sarah grabbed a broom in one hand, a dustpan in the other, and headed back to the bedroom

Sarah shyly opened the door and peered in. To her surprise she found that none of her friends were in the bedroom. Sarah walked to the bedroom closet and flung open the door, but there were no friends in there. Sarah shot a glance at the ceiling, at the dresser, everywhere, but all her friends seemed to have vanished.

The only thing that was in the mirrors were the rooms that her friends lived in.

How could they have left her? She knew that it was her fault the mirror broke. Couldn't her friends understand that she was already feeling guilty? She needed someone to talk to. Feeling rejected, Sarah ran to her canopied bed and buried herself in her covers. Sarah soon fell into a fitful sleep. She tossed and turned in her bed. She dreamt that she was back at school. This time she was at recess with the rest of her classmates. They were taunting her; calling her terrible names. Sarah covered her ears and begged them to be quiet. Her classmates just sneered and moved in closer. Sarah felt someone hit her in the back. Sarah wheeled around to confront her assailant only to be hit in the back again. One blow followed another and Sarah soon found herself being beaten mercilessly by her classmates. Blood was running from her nose. Bruises were beginning to appear dark and ugly on her arms and legs. She felt that if she didn't protect herself from the pelting hands of her classmates she would soon be dead.

Sarah screamed.

Sarah bolted upright in bed to a room full of darkness. Sweat was dripping from her forehead and ran down the side of her flushed cheeks. Sarah stepped out of bed to turn on a light. After Sarah took about three steps she felt pain shoot through her foot like a hundred pointed teeth. Sarah screamed again and groped for the light switch. Locating it, she flipped the switch and found herself once again in her bright bedroom. Sarah looked at her foot and saw blood running from it. In anger, Sarah yelled at the broken mirror that lay at the rug by her bed. "Stupid mirror!"

"Stupied mirror!" echoed around the room.

"I thought she was her friend?" said one voice.

"How soon they forget," said even another.

"Yes. Isn't it terribly, terribly true!" said the first.

"Who said that?" asked Sarah. Sarah frantically glanced around the room, but saw no one.

"Was it you, mirror?" Sarah limped up to the closet door mirror and knocked.

"I said, 'was it you?'" Sarah banged harder on the mirror when suddenly her friends materialized.

"What if it was? Are you going to kill me, too?" asked the mirror.

"What do you mean 'kill you'?"

"Well, you sure did a thorough job on one of our friends," said the mirror motioning towards the shattered hand mirror.

"Yes. Didn't she shough?" commented the dresser mirror.

"I'm sure glad that I wasn't her best friend," injected the ceiling mirror.

"Nor I," said one mirror after another.

"I didn't mean to kill her," yelled Sarah. "She just slipped out of my hand!"

"Clumsy of you, wasn't it?" sta- the closet door mirror. "What was it your mother told you once? 'Treat your friends like you would have them treat you.' Wasn't that it?"

"But it was an accident!" defended Sarah.

"I thought of you as one of the family, Sarah. But you murdered one of our best friends. We can't let you get away with that."

"Certainly not," added the wall mirror.

"I say we kill her!" shouted the ceiling mirrors.

"Yes, kill her!" screamed another mirror.

"Kill her!" screamed the mirrors in unison as the reflections started banging against the glass.

Sarah covered her ears to reduce the sound the mirrors were making. Everywhere she looked, the mirrors were shuddering as the girls inside them struggled to get at her. Sarah ran for the bedroom door only to have it slam shut inches away from her face.

The girl in the mirror on the door folded her arms across her chest and asked, "Going somewhere?"

This was followed by a chorus of insane laughing as all the girls stared evilly at Sarah.

Sarah covered her eyes and hoped they would disappear. As soon as she covered her eyes the laughing stopped.

(continued)

Alone Again, continued

Sarah stood paralyzed with fear. A few minutes passed before Sarah slowly moved her hands away from her eyes.

Sarah's heart stopped for a moment when she saw the girls in the mirrors.

"Kill her with this!" said the wall mirror as it drew taut the scarf that was in her hands.

"No. Kill her with this!" retorted the mirrors above her as they dangled a noose from the ceiling.

"Let me kill her!" screamed the dresser mirror.

"I'll kill her!" I'll kill her!" screamed one girl after another as they tried to break out of their mirrored cells.

Sarah pulled open the bedroom door and rushed down the flight of stairs. Sarah ran to the kitchen and pulled out the biggest knife she could find.

Sarah muttered to herself, "They won't kill me! I thought they were my friends, but they aren't. I hate them all!"

Sarah ran up the stairs and burst into her bedroom. "I'll show you! I'll kill you all."

The mirrors just looked at Sarah and began laughing once again. Sarah tightened her grip on the knife and lunged at the closet door mirror. They screamed as the knife penetrated the glass.

"Sarah, I'm home," called Mrs. Annis, Sarah's mother. "Sarah, answer me when I'm talking to you."

Mrs. Annis waited a few minutes more before she stormed up the stairs to Sarah's room. Mrs. Annis flung open the door. A scream barely escaped Mrs. Annis' lips before she slumped to the floor in a dead faint. In the center of the bedroom floor lay the mutilated body of her daughter. In the mirrors were the dead reflections of her daughter. Each standing in a pool of blood; each with a knffe protruding from their chests.

****

Judy Belfield

THEN AND NOW

No moment but this,
they said,
and it was true,
then,
as they played their lives,
however short,
or long,
on the line of time
that was theirs.

A quiet knife
sliced their existence
from you
and me
without pain
for anyone,
then.

I felt the wound
just now
as the blade gleamed
in a dream
for a moment
that always was.

****

Jerry Frazar

GOLD BEATING

This is your last chance for redemption
(relieved from your burden)
Come with us
This is the end to all your days and ways
(revealed as the emptiness you expected all alone)
Come with us
This is a beginning and an end
(relief from your life)
Come with us
Come with us

Sail away
I feel this way . . .
Sometimes in the presence of women
Standing tall demurely
sighing.
Or speaking of love, and money in the same breath.
Contrsting the gathering entropy
whisping past our ankles
With the languid, perfumed air.
Gently lighted hair,
A hidden tortured stare.

But wait, friendship.
kind words
pure and simple
cast around the room as sweet supple rose petals
are lent us as a guide,
pointing towards a new start.

A leaf leaps from a tree,
Lands gently on the ground,
People from miles around
Sing sweet and crisp and free.

****

Maureen Mueller

MAKE WAY FOR PROGRESS

The super-duper tollway's coming through
Bulldoze the porches
the kitchen
the bedrooms
Trample the garden
(especially Mother's favorite gardenias)
Asphalt the roses
Concrete the grass
Crush the memories
then relocate the remains.

****

Jerry Frazar

HE MADE A CALAMITY OF A WONDROUS THING

Ah, the principle of life,
is to live it.
Such profundity and pragmatism,
strikes me dead in the face.
I leave the room groping with stiff fingers.

****

Judy Belfield

PAPER AIRPLANE

Folding a paper airplane,
small but nimble fingers
attend each crease with care,
a child with dissolving hair
and everchanging features
hums a simple tune
about a cow and a moon,
hands move deftly, slowly,
along the soft, white-pulp remains
of a once-magnificent tree.
Crayons and stubs of pencils,
ground-down erasers,
and this afternoon's peanut-butter-and-jelly
forlornly wait their turns--

a dream is about to fly.

****

Dave O'Brien

A LINE OF CARS

A line of cars
Along the road
To say their last goodbye.
In assured hope
The line of cars
Will be there when they die.

****

Jerry Frazar

GUARANTEED MUTUAL DESTRUCTION

The concept of a limited hormonal war
gives even the most hard-nosed clinical
psychologist,
a nosebleed.

****

Jayne Woodcock

YOU WHO HAVE BEEN CUT

You who have been cut
Rather than binding your wound
Seek to return pain

Tears flow like warm blood
Forgive, set free and find peace
Snap the vengeful blade

****

Maureen Mueller

OLD SINS

Relics of old sins--
the remains of human weakness
A repentant spirit
(nurtured in fear, trained in
soul-preservation)
gathered up the necessary contriteness

But somehow . . .
like ancient art
the distortions have faded
and left a kind of grace

****

Maureen Mueller

THE RRETENSE

Grandpa lay dying
that whole summer
And each morning
And each afternoon
I'd pretend
and play with my dolls
my jacks
my jump rope
And skip along
the roses he cared for
the fence he painted
the hedges he pruned
But never, never outside his bedroom door
or near the chance
of his echoing silence

****

Dave O'Brien

THE WEED OF MEMORY

The clinging vine
Which chokes the thoughts at hand
Brings forth the Gardener
With a spray of toxic sand

And in some gray deceit
The vines seem to wither and retreat

New thoughts
Ease the burden of passing time
A richly colored vision
Of beatitude and rhyme

And naked in the summer heat
Searching, searching, whole, complete

Rooted past
Fertilized by forgotten time
Old thoughts
Like the vine, begin to climb

Peace of mind, and then
The clinging vine again.

****

Judy Belfield

OFF COURSE, OF COURSE

Judging from the position of the planets,
We are, perhaps,
A thousand miles from reason
But cannot close the gap
Without a proper cap-set
And a brand new pair of feet.

The distance, we might say,
Between here and there,
Is a dark (or heavy) year
And we'll all be as wrinkled
As last month's laundry
Before the first step is taken.

Not that the destination
Is so desirable--
I, at least, could be content
At the border of Disorder--
But there seems to be a need,
Inherent in the fellows,
To keep the measures straight,
The numbers in line.

A parallelogram, after all,
Even for its alliterative name,
Must be what it has become.

****

Jayne Woodcock

I GOT THOSE

I got those
Lo down, mean red rhythm
Tap tap tap typewriter blues
I say those
Lo down, cold, cold shoulder
Righteous typewriter baby blues
When I'm poundin on those keys, baby
That's when my heart is in my shoes

Damn thing's got
Forty-nine keys, baby
An they all feel the same
I say that
Damn thing's got forty-nine keys baby
An they all feel the same
If you miss one little type
It's gonna ruin your name
Maybe for good this time sugar

Folks say,
"Keep your eyes off your fingers"
"Don't you know that aint the way?"
They say
"Git your eyes off your fingers girl"
"Don't you know that aint the way?"
But when I try to type "I love you"
It reads 809F369J

I say
Gimme a pencil!
Gimme a pen
If you can't read my handwriting
That's your tough luck, publisher man

I got those
Lo down, mean red rhythm
Tap tap typewriter blues
When I'm poundin on those keys, baby
That's when my heart is in my shoes
When you're doin thirty words a minute
You know you never will get done
You stuck with this
Your story never will get done
An bout the time you really mess up honey
Your white-out's nowhere to be found

I got those
Lo down, mean red rhythm
Tap, tap, tap typewriter blues
I got those
Lo down, cold, cold shoulder
Righteous typewriter baby blues
When I'm poundin on those keys baby
That's when my heart is in my shoes
(Fade out of mock Blind Lemon Jefferson vocal spot and a bit of muffled hand-clapping)

****

Nancy Lockhart

UNFINISHED

The color of worn-out skin--
This February feeling
Arrives like a sad telegram;
Returns like the heavy sea.
A dirge I've memorized.

Let me slip it on again
for size.
Again, it always hangs.
Its lining black & cold.
But, like the breath of the drunk
in the back of the bus,
It comes with the ticket I bought.

I ride stiff and burdened,
But I ride;
Still I ride.

****

Judy Belfield

COLD COFFEE

Lightin one cigarette after another,
Watchin the wall change colors
With my mood
From violet-blue to black--

I had plans for today,
Waged all my feelings
On an expectation,
Had the words all ready
And the coffee too.

It was gonna be so nice,
Me and you,
And just the breeze to shoot.

I should know better.

****

Dave O'Brien

TWO PHASES OF THE SAME MOON
OR
THE INTERCOURSE OF A HYDE AND HYDE RELATIONSHIP

At home he'd only scratch his head
In public scratch his eyes
Behind closed walls he'd gaze and think
With others tell his lies.

In quiet sullen solitude, his lips
would calmly smile
Amongst the world he'd laugh too hard;
to try and show his style
A lightly darkened mega bega, who seeks;
a bit too proud
Who swallows all the madness, as he's
lurching through a crowd
A somnambulistic dreaming myth, off to
find a cloud.

Alone he suffers silently
Beneath the stars out loud.

****

Leonard Ludtke

FERTILE MENTAL SOIL

Fertile mental soil,
So many seeds are planted,
Does your garden grow?

****

Judy Belfield

INTRUDER

She snaps off the light,
rolls over to the wall,
closes her eyes,
not knowing
Fear has tiptoed across the room
and slid into her bed--
an invisible Lothario
mad with need.

****

Leonard Ludtke

HAIKU

Lost in yesterday,
How will I find tomorrow,
Unless I free me?

***

Silently struggling,
Reaching up to touch the sun,
Blade of grass growing.

***

Caverns of coral,
Bright beauty and deep danger,
Castle of the shark.

***

Tiny invaders,
Painting a downy landscape,
Snowflakes are falling.

***

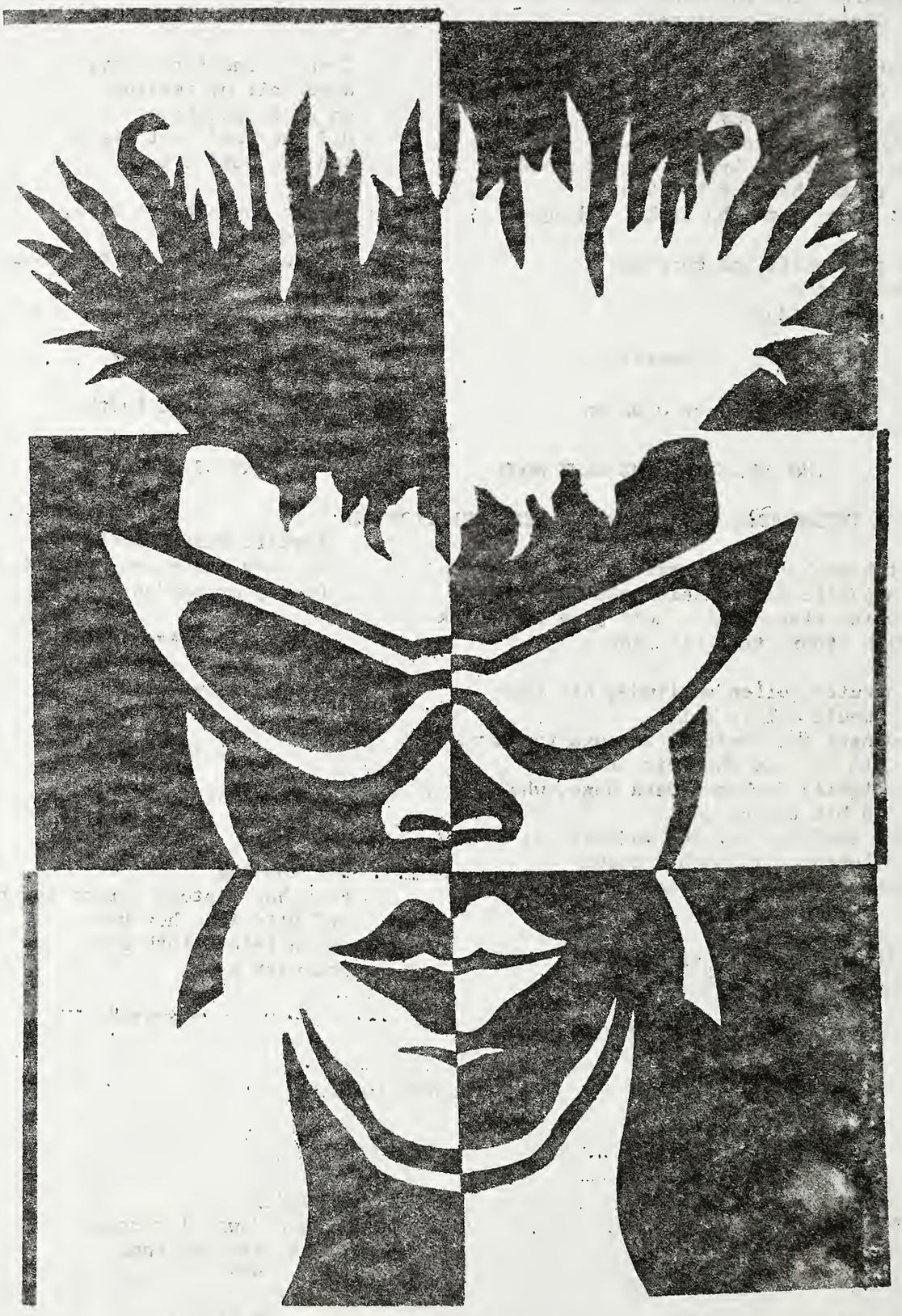
Innocence in flight,
Young runner's delicate grace,
Dappled fawn fleeing.

***

Silent brooding clan,
Breathless army of giants,
Primeval forest.

***

****



Antoinette

SUICIDAL SATIRE

Wrists slashed!
Pills stashed!

I have nothing to live for
Happiness has closed its door
in my face.

Pull the trigger, as I figure
No one will notice my leaving
There will be no grieving
for my place--in anyone's life.

Sharpen the knife!

. . . On second thought, I
don't believe I'm that unhappy.

****

Jenny Jones

THE BEAST WITHIN

1

I don't know what I want--what this crazy lust is. All I know is that it's doing nasty things in my brain, sinking steel claws into soft gray tissue, shredding, pulverizing . . . turning the colors all askew making me see them where they don't belong . . . far down the corridor I can hear the thing coming--sinuous, lean, black body; narrow crafty eyes; steel razor-sharp talons with malign intent: slinking silently through dark, narrow, gray passages . . . triggered into a sudden frenzy, it attacks, leaps cat-like, tears into the gray matter of a wall, ripping a great rent through which brilliant, poisonous colors ooze. Screaming in ecstasy, the creature careens down blank, smooth, gray halls; possessed in a drunken, maniacal, depraved rage . . . wantonly skidding into the sides of the corridors--tearing fresh scars into the gently yielding brain tissue, allowing more colored thoughts to escape into the forbidden adjacent halls. . . finally--it rests.

For now . . .

2

Deep inside the thing lurks . . . a surrealistic semblance of a twisted leer affixed on its horrible countenance . . . its cunning, slitted eyes mirror my fear of itself--separating and refracting the rays as a prism in the sunlight. Hiding just around a dark corner, it feeds upon my doubt: mocking, taunting--secure in the belief that it will win yet another battle. I shrink even now in revulsion in contemplation of what it forces me to do. How I have learned to dread the feel of its cold, sensual touch brushing against me, driving my every nerve to urgency. I can never catch it! Always a thought away, a shadow in the darkness, peering at me around corners, biding its time to strike hardest when I am least ready. Will I never be free of its incessant pounding, pounding, on the walls, rocking the very foundations of my sanity, striving in a ceaseless endeavor to possess me.?

3

I am barely hanging on to my firm grip on real things where I am sure of myself and am not afraid. There must be a way to stop it. I cannot succumb--it would mean my ruin. It is destroying me. Must I always run? What if I caught it: turned around and chased it? What would happen--what would it do? I am afraid to fall asleep--it lurks there in wait for me--in my blackest nightmares in every dream tainted with fear, need, driving me on, on, on, running, waking with a start in cold sweat, tangled sheets, only to find that the nightmare fades, but the thing remains. It comes, eyes gleaming like a drawn sword, grinning, coaxing, whispering, glittering malice, eager for the game. Some nasty sounds, and the silence of claws scoring brain flesh. (A rat in the attic, perhaps) There is no escape. For it is not beside me, but in me. In the very center of my being--the mind--it was, and is. A hellish, awesome, entity, mocking my futile attempts to cage it, it causes constant doubt and confusion. The fever is back, and my head aches with pressure. Help me, is it me?

Judy Belfield

NIGHT TERRORS

"Please stay,"
she say,
"Stay and keep the dark away."
She so scared,
monsters hidin in corners,
waitin for night,
waitin for the light to fade.

She so afraid
she say
"Please stay,"
and start to cry.
Her skin shiver,
she quiver like a mouse
in a snake's eye.

She don't know why
she afraid of monsters
made of air,
and she don't care.
She just whimper
and pray,
"Please stay."

****

****

J. Scott Helm

REUSE, REFUSE

Distraction, distortion
Constriction, contradiction
I see an opening.
I move for it,
it closes.
Why?
I'm not trying to take
advantage of a situation.
Only to give as well as receive.
But why the mixed messages?
Anxiety overwhelms
Am I reading the message right?
Or could it be just over reaction.
Affection, rejection
Discourse, recourse
Am I reaching for too much?
Do I want too much?
Am I trying to reflect what I'm receiving
or sending what I want to receive?
Receive, deceive
Confusion, disillusion.

****

Jayne Woodcock

FIELD FURROWS GLIMMER

Field furrows glimmer
Ice clinging to the earth's face
Reflections of sun

****

Dave O'Brien

STREET SCENES 2A.M.

Abstract geometry of crystal snow
Fuses with satin black top
Shining glare of nocturnal lights
Red, Amber, Green.
A car rambles on by
Going nowhere, seeking shelter
Police cruiser with spotlight,
White flame stares into dark desolation.
Sitting, silent, sullen
Only to hear the swoosh of tires on tired
wet pavement.
Water tower like a giant pin
Pierces the earth's delicate skin
While wind-blown flags frantically wave
As if to attract attention
No one looks,
It's a tranquil which will rise into hysteria
This other side of morning in a middle class
America.

****

Judy Belfield

DEFINITIONS

An unfettered, freeflowing line of words,
Another, shorter, less mellifluous--
Penning the mind ineptly,
Confining the soul to squiggles.

Ha!
Who fools which fool
Into believing there is truth
In the barrel of a Jotter
Made by Parker with a T-Ball tip?

What writing instruments we are!
That a piece of coal or a quill
Could communicate a thought
With all its peculiar particulars,
All its colorations and shadings,
And yet, somehow, we understand--
Generally.

****

R. Walser Yale

RIDE ON THE HIGHWAY

Ride on the highway
Into a mountain of clouds
Wondering how far.

****

Leonard Ludtke

SPIRAL ENDLESSLY

Spiral endlessly,
Laughing liquid melody,
Dragonfly ballet.

****

Rosemary Grossi

COMPOST

Compost
Crumbling, crunching, crackling--free!
Through the air falling on me
Scarlet, orange, green, and brown
Millions more are floating down
Pile them up in nice soft beds
Where the night winds rest their heads.

****

Jerry Frazar

AN ODD PEACE

Young, swift blades of grass
push up through the moist, fresh dung;
our hearts pulse calmly

****

Jayne Woodcock

HERE I SPEAK

Here I speak as one lover to another
Of the city that understands me
I am no child of warm neon
Polished steel, glass and strings of electric stars
That dapple small trees along the lakeshore
Majestic and beautiful the downtown claims to be
With its great, glitterig towers and well-mannered flowers
But Carson's and Field's leave me cold
If this is the heart of the city, where lies its soul?
With my back to the dash and the glamour
I blow north past the S-curve
Past the University
And turn my boots west to slanted streets
Following the sweet, smoky trail of burnt grass
And open air sax
Through back street tree-green and brown-stone
Over concrete slab crumbling, sidewalk half-sunk/half heaved
Up from the hard earth's mindless, but loving embrace
I pause to enjoy the lush shadows resting cool and silent upon my face
Then break through the quiet leafy curtain
To find I have dropped into the city's gut
Tripped and sprawled headlong into the churning, burning center of it all
The shouts hurled across cracked grey streets and parking meters
Flung back in violent echoes off smoke-stained brick and rusted autos
Jammed end to end, lining countless blocks of crumbling, ash-blackened curbing
While a thousand and more battered vehicles howl lustily as they roar past
Bodies glinting dangerously in the electric moonlight
Footfalls clatter noisily down an alleyway to the left
But upon peeking 'round the corner
One finds the shadows are empty and silent, trash cand and cobblestones staring mutely back, telling nothing
The city is a thick, blunt block of darkness
Blues oozing from every crack, every pore
Beneath every locked door
Darkness hatchet-hacked by street lamp, neon and headlight glare
Into a new animal, one that has seen time and anger
These foreign elements have scored jagged scars into its once-smooth surface
Dug niches for themselves so permanent and deep
That they now breathe as the darkness breathes
Pulse as the darkness pulses
Know all its elements by taste alone
And contain all its memories
This town is bawdy and bloody
Bared thigh and lipstick smear
Elevated rattle-track
Or on foot dodging the neverending vehicle flow below
This town is a heartbeat hard and fast
Life pressing close for warmth
Like the bodies of secret lovers
Exchanging rough caresses in the shadows of an abandoned doorway
This town is innocence with evil
Upon its lips, thinking it fine
Condemned to remain
The eternal youth, holding no love save for the moment
This town does not and never will toddle, stroll gracefully, speak graciously
That is all glossy paint and polish
A brocaded robe disguising the beast beneath
Or icing on the atom bomb
This town has dirt beneath its fingernails
For this town leaps and scrambles
This town shouts and whispers, with a voice rough and cracked as its streets
This town lives

****

Rosemary Grossi

RAT-A-TAT CAT

My rat-a-tat cat
hissed and spat
furrball fluff
and cuddly stuff
purring sweetly
cunning cat . . .
When you expect it least
he becomes a tiny jungle beast!

****

Colleen Kelley

MY DREAM COME TRUE

Let me introduce a Classic Chevy fanatic--me. I especially like cars made from 1955 through 1957. Owning a Classic Chevy has been a dream of mine for at least five years. That dream came true in July, 1982, when I purchased a run-down 1956 Chevy two-ten, four-door sedan with the intent to restore it to showroom condition. The problem I

(continued)

encountered is that after I restored it to factory fresh condition, I didn't want to drive it too much. Who would want to drive a restoration in the snow and rain and let it rust away, or go shopping and get it all nicked up? You don't want to go too far from home in an original 1956 Chevy. After all, where can you get a water pump fifty miles from home, on a Sunday, for a twenty-seven year-old car?

My Classic '56 Chevy now sits in my garage parked in all its glory, but let me tell you about its beginning.

When I purchased my Chevy, it have numerous interior and exterior "cuts and bruises," but no major wounds. The ensuing restoration took a lot of sanding, pounding, stitching, painting, skinned knuckles and broken fingernails, not to mention the patience of a saint and a few swear words, but it was all a labor of love.

The end result is a far cry from the beginning project. You should have seen that car when I found it! Only a true Chevy lover could see its potential standing there amid the weeds abused and neglected. The big question was whether or not the car would run long enough to get it home. My sister, embarrassed to be seen in what she termed a "junker," walked home. Lucky for her and the "junk," home was only a couple of miles away.

After the ordeal of getting the "junk" home, the fun part began. First I tackled the inside; everything on the inside came outside. Then I wire-brushed the inside metal to remove rust, patched the flooring where needed, and coated the floor with rust preventative. After all of this, came the rebuilding. I put insulation and carpeting on the floor of the car. Next came reupholstering the front and back seats. After the reupholstering was completed, my dad and I fabricated and installed four new door panels and a rear package shelf. Also, my Chevy now has a radio for the first time in its life. Connecting all of those wires was quite a trick.

Now that my Chevy had a like-new interior, my attention turned to the exterior. First the entire car was sanded down to bare metal, dents pounded out, and scratches filled in. Then the car was primed and painted. With four new wheels and wide, white-walled tires, an oil change, lube job, tune-up, and a new exhaust system, the entire project was completed. The "ugly duckling" is now a "beautiful swan"!

I am now the proud owner of an emerald green and white, fully-restored 1956 Chevrolet. Do you care to go for a ride sometime? I am always happy to show off my pride and joy, which is also my dream come true.

****

Jerry Frazar

HISTORY OF WESTERN CIVILIZATION
PART 37, LIZARDS IN THE EARLY CHURCH

Bright, bright, bright
Irridescent
Fright, fright, fright
Joy and
Light, light, light
Mingle in distraction.

A cool breeze and a wave of silence
Blows thru my hair
I walk thru silly streets in a dream
And dream of you.

The artist lights another cigarette
And ponders his fate

A sweet slow release
Leaves me in light

Bright, bright, bright

****

Nancy Lockhart

BEDLAM

The sheets with the smell of backyard air,
White as toothpaste,
Cradled us that night like picnic
children.
Me with my basket of love;
You with your appetite.
I never saw the distant cloud approach.
I was too unprepared for thunder.
Too soon I was left with morning's
crumbs
And the feel of set-in stains.

****

Rosemary Grossi

EMPATHY

Empathy
Where have all
the answers gone?
I used to
have them all.
Everything was
black or white,
day or night.
Then one day
I went astray.
You touched me
and everything became
variegated shades of gray.

****

Kim Scholl

HALLUCINATIONS

Give me
your arm,
And with
this rusty needle
and elastic band
I can
Take you
To a land
In your mind
Where fantasy
And reality
Melt
Into one.
Creating
Visions
Of monsters,
And clowns
Dancing
A sinister dance
In a distant
Castle
Where everything
Is as transparent
As your eyes
And
Your mind.

****

Nancy Lockhart

TURN OF THE TIDE

It lingers on the sheets
& in the clothes I gather--
The smell of you--
Your neck, your hands,
The perfume of your loins.

Farewell, night's magic,
In final token.
The laundrymat is where I'm at,
Where sweet enchantment's broken.

****

Jerry Frazar

IN THE BEGINNING

Gently, I transcribe my heart's
Depth, width, length and breath
to a form palatable to mortal ears.

You sway in your breezes
And go where your muse leads . . .
I would be that breeze, blowing
I would court your muse, going
to sea.
My bankruptcy seeks life in your words,
to feel
The gentle breath of your spirit
caress my neck.
Please write, and let me
feel your power,
feel your remoteness shrivel down to a warm
touch, when you write.

My room is square, grey, cluttered with
Records, plants, posters . . .
And lying softly on the edge of the bed
your words.

****

Jerry Frazar

MAYBE

Time slips (laughingly free and easy)
Through our waiting hands
And lands (dreadfully free and queasy)
at our feet.
We've walked away from it.

Last Tuesday I watched you dress,
You combed your hair and laughed it off.
"I know what boys like,
I know what guys want"
That's what you said
And I left for class, late again
With all of the indicators in the red, again
I heard what you said,
But now off to bed . . .

Now I lay me down to sleep
(praying)
My hope for a different tomorrow
Stands clouded
In sickly contrast
With all our yesterdays.

****

Anonymous

PUNISHMENT

Frustration.
Caught in a part of the world and a society
Whose propaganda for two centuries disputed
The truth that I am living proof of,
While I and my predecessors stand by watching
Situations spiral out of control
And bide our time,
Producing heirs who will one day
Reclaim our birthright after the
Great Experiment of popular government proves itself again
To be a failure.
As it did in the past. As it will do in the future.
There is no doubt that I will be a success.
There is no doubt in my mind at all
When I look at my competition,
Whose weaknesses and lack of discipline
Will eventually eliminate them from the running.
I will succeed, even against great odds,
Odds created by restrictive rules.
Rules created by those who seek to topple
Those few of my ilk.
I will seek my fortune on the other side
Of the world, in the land of the great sands.
Alone.
This is my way, bred into Me from
Thousands of years past.
The way of the Aryan.

Hope.
I have always detached myself.
Only very occasionally, when I
Was younger and naive to the natural
Cruelty of human nature, did I
Expose my heart to certain
Ones who failed to
Realize what they were witnessing.
Through time, I raised my standards
Closed myself in, appeared to be aloof and
Arrogant to those who did not understand.
Then an act of fate caused the meeting of
Her to take place. Uniwttingly, she broke down
The barrier. She passed all expectations and
Close examinations of character.
Her intelligence, grace, charm, beauty, whose combination
Thereof has never been equalled.
I believe I have finally met my alter ego, my
Soul mate. The almost
Telepathic thought exchanges,
The conversations without uttering a word.
It is chilling. It is warming. It is fate.

Frustration.
After protecting the heart in its
Cynical armor, expecting the
Worst, hoping the best, I sent out feelers
To see what the response was. The findings
Surprised me. She was never appreciated, in personal
Turmoil, constantly hurt by those ignorant of her,
Betrayed by those she trusted. She subconsciously
Reached out. I received. An informal bond was established.
But she had learned to mistrust her heart
And ignore her instincts and We stand apart.
If I press the situation, she will flee, withdraw.
If I retain the status-quo I am forced
To stand from afar and be torn apart,
Disrupting my concentration on My future.
I must bide my time.
The standoff will eventually end.
She states that she wants to keep in contact
After we go our separate ways in the spring, even though
She belongs to another who she really doesn't understand.
I know she doesn't understand the significance of what
I offer her: a chance to grow as a person, a mind; a companion
who respects her and her thoughts and ideas, one who asks
And lives for her respect; a provider who
Will keep her from want; a lover who will
Be gentle and considerate; and a Father of her children who will strive to set an example that she would approve of.
A person to make her laugh when times
are good, and to comfort her when they
Are not. Above all else, show a loyalty
That is rarely seen in this century, this
Age. Chivalry is not dead. This is
My way, bred into me from thousands of years.
The way of the Aryan.

I must have committed some insurmountable wrong in
My past, and this frustration is my punishment.
I am trained for and accustomed to frustration, but I
Believe I won't bear this one well. In the end, I could
Very well flee to the other side of the world.
Alone.

****

Jayne Woodcock

GENTLE DEEPENING BLUE

Gentle deepening blue
Ethereal rapture-capturing sky color
That is in your eyes
They ebb and flow with information valuable to me
Windows through which I view your many moods
Laugh, a reflection of affection
Or a backwards roll of condescension
Accompanied by a half-frown
Familiar these feel, comfortable, to me
But
Sometimes
Blue becomes flatly opaque
I catch your eyes turned inward, and far away
Your expressive face smooth, blank, empty
Unreadable
Silent I remain, hoping not to spoil whatever dream you wander through
A little jealous, wondering if the landscape is beautiful
Wishing I could share it with you
Or perhaps it is not a dream
But a troublesome thought
Gnawing insistently at the back of your brain
Willing would I be to offer help, were this the case,
But because you remain tight-lipped, so do I,
refusing to invade the privacy you so greatly treasure
I am presumptuous enough to wonder
But not presumptuous enough to inquire
"What's going on in there?"

****

Nancy Lockhart

DANNY

We fell apart like limbs from a rag doll,
Stitch by weakened stitch,
Soft and slow and sad
That year I turned sixteen.

A Fifth Avenue love
Stashed in a memory closet,
Unfurled now and then,
Restores the sight of my wild eye
& I see how good it was
When we loved the stuffing out of each other.

****

Rosemary Grossi

ERUDITION

Longings lingering,
Lying here
Body aching with desire.
Wishing, wanting
One so near,
Now we know fate was a liar.

Feelings fingering,
Fondling fear
Shadows etched in sin's fire.
Soothing, seething
Sent a tear,
Raised us up a level higher.

Merging, mingling,
Melting clear
Reaffirming knowledge prior.
Healing, hungering,
Hurt severe,
Gave us wisdom to admire.

****

Rosemary Grossi

NAKED

Naked
Let me see you without all those clothes.
You've clutched them tightly to your chest,
covering up with defenses nature loathes.
I long for the closeness of you undressed.
Relax, let me help you to become exposed.
Open up, I'll pull you gently to my breast.
The garments you cling to needlessly
keep us from exploring unseen territory,
hinted at, yet kept from view, hidden deeply.
We can go no farther in our relationship
unless you get the courage to completely strip
yourself of the wall surrounding your soul.
It's not your body I yearn for, but you as a whole.

****

Anonymous

TIME TO MEDITATE

. . . . . .

?

. . .

!

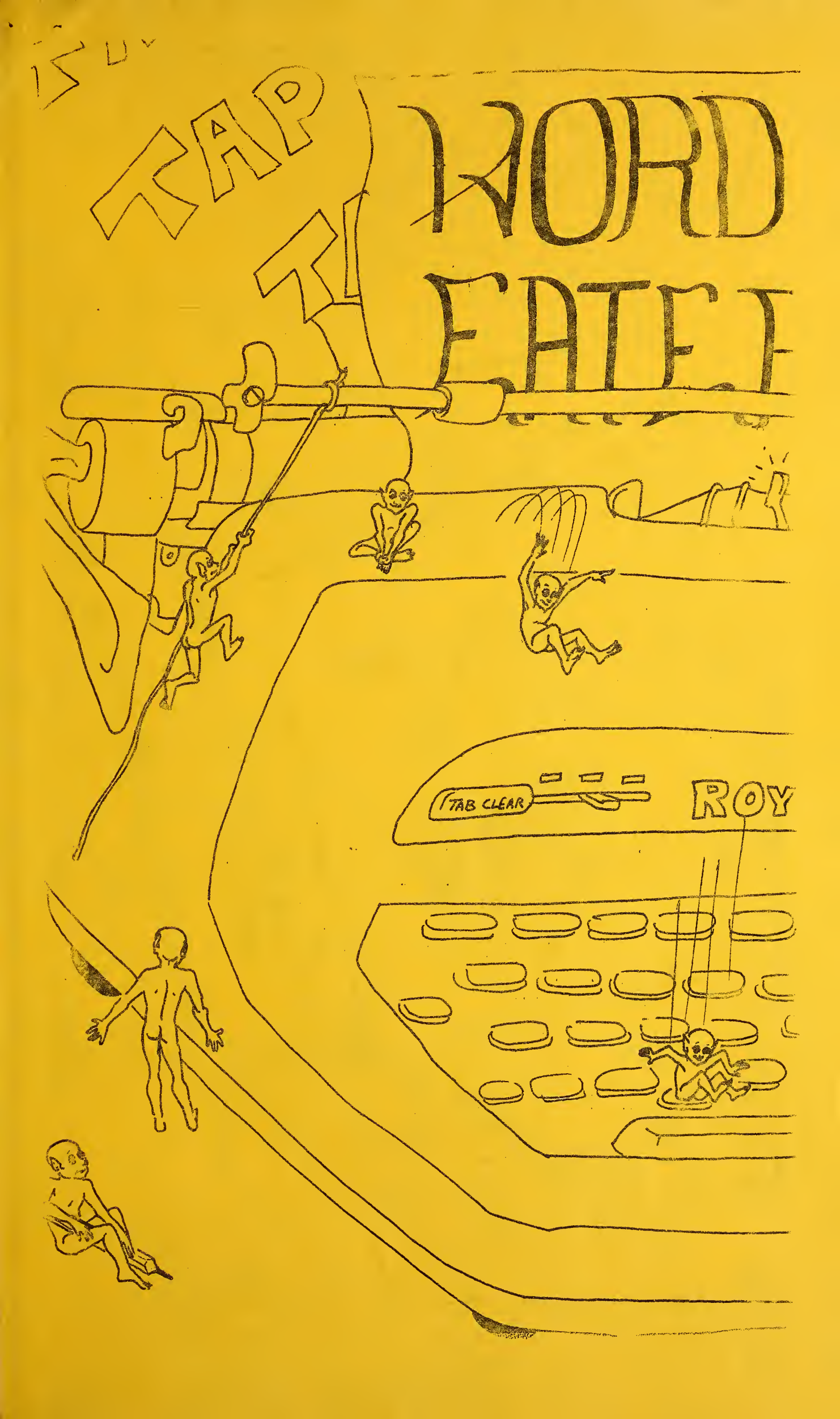
. . .

. . .

?

. . .

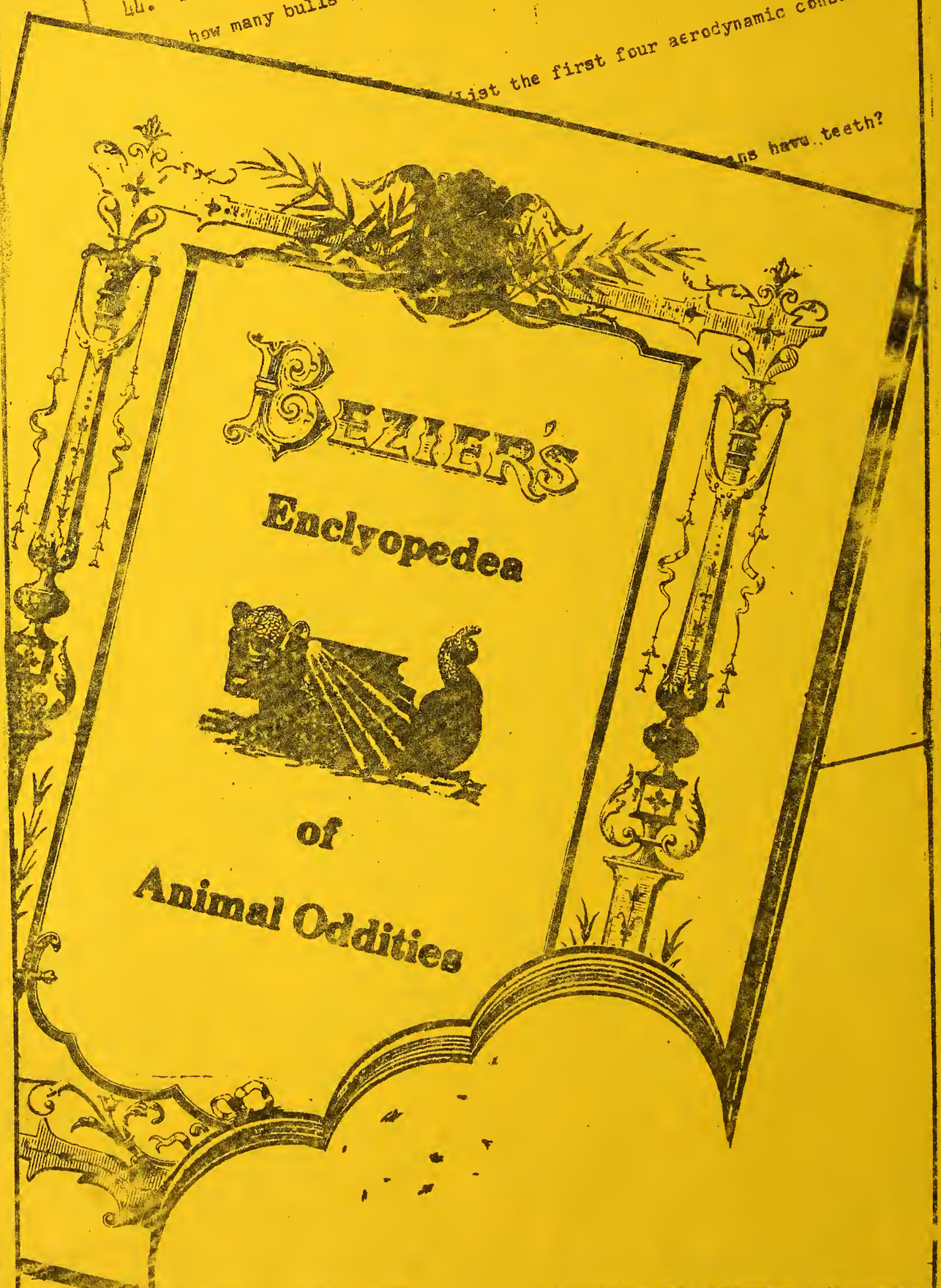
****


TAP
WORD
EATER
TAB CLEAR
ROY

42. What is the average numb

43. How many pecks are in a chicken?

44. If Sally had a Brahma bull that ate three bushels of feed per week, how many bulls would Sally need to consume the U.S. grain rese

...list the first four aerodynamic considerati

...ns have teeth?